

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A viewing panel device for use in a vehicle including a relatively rearwardly-positioned vehicle seat with a seat back having a top surface, comprising:

a viewing panel having a front viewing surface and a rear surface; and

a support structure attached to said rear surface of said viewing panel, said support structure including

a bottom panel having a top surface and a bottom surface that can contact the seat back top surface, and

a diagonal support element that extends between said rear surface of said viewing panel at an upper end of said support element and said top surface of said bottom panel at a lower end of said support element.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein said front surface of said viewing panel comprises a mirror positionable for viewing an infant in a rear-facing child safety seat on the vehicle seat.

3. The device of claim 1, wherein said diagonal support element is adjustable.

4. The device of claim 1, which can be used in vehicles having a rear shelf behind the seat back, wherein said bottom panel has an extending tail which can be tucked in between the vehicle seat back and the rear shelf for frictional engagement.

5. The device of claim 1, which can be used in vehicles having a relatively rearwardly-positioned vehicle seat with a seat back having a top surface and a rear surface, wherein said bottom panel has an extending tail which has an element of a

fastener on the underside thereof for removably fastening to the vehicle seat rear surface.

6. The device of claim 1, which further comprises:
an element of a fastener attached to a relatively upper portion of said viewing panel; and

a tether strap extending from said bottom panel and terminating in a fastener that can be attached either to the top tether anchorage point in a vehicle having a top tether anchorage point intended for attachment of the top tether of a forward-facing child safety seat, or to said fastener element when said tether strap is looped around the headrest in a vehicle having a headrest positioned over the vehicle seat back;

whereby said device has a plurality of attachment configurations for use in different possible vehicle configurations.

7. The device of claim 6, which is for use in further possible vehicle configurations including in vehicles in which the vehicle seat back has an accessible rear surface, and in vehicles wherein the vehicle seat is a rear seat and which have a rear shelf behind the seat back, wherein:

said bottom panel has an extending tail;

said extending tail has an element of a fastener on the underside thereof for removably fastening to the vehicle seat rear surface in vehicles in which the vehicle seat rear surface is accessible; and

said extending tail can be tucked in between the vehicle seat back and the rear shelf for frictional engagement in vehicles configured with a rear shelf behind the seat back.

8. A viewing panel device having a plurality of attachment configurations for use in vehicles including a relatively rearwardly-positioned vehicle seat with a seat back

having a top surface, and of a plurality of possible vehicle configurations including in vehicles having a top tether anchorage point intended for attachment of the top tether of a forward-facing child safety seat, and in vehicles having a headrest positioned over the vehicle seat back, said device comprising:

- a viewing panel having a front viewing surface and a rear surface;

- a bottom panel attached to a relatively lower portion of said viewing panel rear surface, said bottom panel having a top surface and a bottom surface that can contact the seat back top surface;

- an element of a fastener attached to a relatively upper portion of said viewing panel;

- a diagonal support element that can extend between said rear surface of said viewing panel at an upper end of said support element and said top surface of said bottom panel at a lower end of said support element; and

- a tether strap extending from said bottom panel and terminating in a fastener that can be attached either to the top tether anchorage point in a vehicle so configured or to said fastener element when said tether strap is looped around the headrest in a vehicle so configured.

9. The device of claim 8, wherein said front surface of said viewing panel comprises a mirror positionable for viewing an infant in a rear-facing child safety seat on the vehicle seat.

10. The device of claim 8, wherein said diagonal support element is adjustable.

11. The device of claim 8, which is for use in further possible vehicle configurations including in vehicles in which the vehicle seat back has an accessible rear surface, and in

vehicles wherein the vehicle seat is a rear seat and which have a rear shelf behind the seat back, wherein:

said bottom panel has an extending tail;

said extending tail has an element of a fastener on the underside thereof for removably fastening to the vehicle seat rear surface in vehicles in which the vehicle seat rear surface is accessible; and

said extending tail can be tucked in between the vehicle seat back and the rear shelf for frictional engagement in vehicles configured with a rear shelf behind the seat back.

12. A viewing panel device for use in a vehicle including a rear vehicle seat with a seat back having a top surface, and a rear shelf behind the seat back, said device comprising:

a viewing panel having a front viewing surface and a rear surface; and

a support structure attached to said rear surface of said viewing panel, said support structure including a portion that contacts the seat back top surface, and said support structure having an extending tail;

whereby said extending tail can be tucked in between the vehicle seat back and the rear shelf for frictional engagement.

13. The device of claim 12, wherein said front surface of said viewing panel comprises a mirror positionable for viewing an infant in a rear-facing child safety seat on the vehicle seat.

14. The device of claim 12, wherein said support structure is adjustable.

15. The device of claim 12, wherein said support structure comprises:

a bottom panel having a top surface and a bottom surface that contacts the seat back top surface; and

a diagonal support element that extends between said rear surface of said viewing panel at an upper end of said support element and said top surface of said bottom panel at a lower end of said support element.

16. The device of claim 15, wherein said diagonal support element is adjustable.

17. A viewing panel device for use in a vehicle including a relatively rearwardly-positioned vehicle seat with a seat back having a top surface and a rear surface, said device comprising:

a viewing panel having a front viewing surface and a rear surface; and

a support structure attached to said rear surface of said viewing panel, said support structure including a portion that contacts the seat back top surface, and said support structure having an extending tail;

said extending tail having an element of a fastener on the underside thereof for removably fastening to the vehicle seat rear surface.

18. The device of claim 17, wherein said front surface of said viewing panel comprises a mirror positionable for viewing an infant in a rear-facing child safety seat on the vehicle safety seat.

19. The device of claim 17 which further comprises a mating element of a fastener that is secured to the vehicle seat rear surface and positioned for engaging said fastener element on said extending tail.

20. The device of claim 17, wherein said support structure is adjustable.

21. The device of claim 17, wherein said support structure comprises:

a bottom panel having a top surface and a bottom surface that contacts the seat back top surface; and

a diagonal support element that extends between said rear surface of said viewing panel at an upper end of said support element and said top surface bottom panel at a lower end of said support element.

22. The device of claim 21, wherein said diagonal support element is adjustable.